Government has advised OMCs to liquidate the backlog in the States by operating the bottling plants on holidays and during extended hours. Increased bottling is also being done during the working days for early clearance of backlog.

(c) The enrolment of new LPG customers and release of new LPG connections is a continuous process. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, new LPG connections are available across the counter for genuine domestic customers on verification of documents as per laid down procedure.

OMCs have reported that as on 1.2.2008 they are having 108.4 lakh domestic LPG connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh. OMCs have released 4.6 lakh new LPG connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the period from April, 2007-January, 2008 as against 3.2 lakh connections during the corresponding period of last year.

Fiberglass LPG cylinders

570. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry is seriously considering to introduce fiberglass LPG cylinders to prevent malpractice of LPG distribution;

(b) if so, whether the fiberglass LPG cylinders are also as safe as the existing LPG cylinders;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether a Committee has been constituted by the Department of Consumer Affairs to identify the problems being faced by LPG consumers, particularly with regard to malpractices in distribution; and

(e) if so, the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Government has conveyed "in principle" approval to the Public Sector Oil Markeing Companies (OMCs) for expanding the product line by way of introduction of composite cylinders for marketing domestic LPG, subject to there being no subsidy element in the LPG to be marketed through these composite cylinders. To start with, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) along with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) intend to import some cylinders and do test marketing in selected cities.

OMCs are procuring LPG cylinders from cylinder manufacturers who have valid manufacturing licences from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Chief Controller of Explosives (CCoE). LPG cylinders procured by OMCs meet the required quality standards.

OMCs have reported that necessary approval of CCoE has been obtained for use of composite cylinders for LPG.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. No Committee has been constituted by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to identify the problems being faced by LPG consumers.

Southern Gas Grid Project

571. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering a Southern Gas Grid Project, convering States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to connect the K.G. Basin Gas through all these States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Gas pipelines are laid according to gas availability and connect production and consumption centers. A network of trunk gas pipelines is being laid connecting customers in the southern part of the country to various sources of natural gas.

Currently GAIL (India) Limited has pipeline network in Krishna-Godavari basin and Cauvery basin in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu respectively. Reliance Gas Transportation Infrastructure Limited (RGTIL) is constructing Kakinada-Hyderabad-Uran-Ahmedabad pipeline, which would *inter alia* connect parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to the KG-D6 field. RGTIL has also been granted authorization for Vijayawada-Nellore-Chennai pipeline, as also its extensions Chennai-Tuticorin and Chennai-Bangalore-Mangalore pipelines; these pipelines would connect parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to the KG-D6 field. GAIL has been granted authorization for Dabhol-Bangalore pipeline; this would be a bi-directional pipeline transporting Re-gasified LNG from Dabhol LNG terminal to Bangalore and natural gas from RGTIL's pipeline at Bangalore to Maharashtra. GAIL has also been granted authorization for Kochi-Kanjirakkod-Mangalore/Bangalore pipeline; this would also be a bi-directional pipeline transporting Re-gasified LNG from the upcoming Kochi LNG terminal to Kerala and Karnataka, and natural gas from RGTIL's pipeline.

Transit fee for Indo-Iran Gas Pipiline

572. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for three nation gas pipeline consisting of India, Iran and Pakistan is in progress;

(b) if so, the present status of above deal in detail;

(c) the steps taken, if any, to resolve the transit fee issue associated with the project; and

(d) the details of steps taken to resolve the technical issues between the participating countries, if any, and the period of implementation of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) India has been pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) transnational gas pipeline. Important issues concerning the implementation of the Project, including *inter alia* project structure, gas price, transportation tariff and transit fee for passage of gas through Pakistan, are under discussion amongst the participating countries at bilateral and trilateral levels. Five meetings of India-Pakistan Joint Working Group (JWG) have been held so far. Three meetings of India-Iran Special JWG and six tripartite meetings have been held so far. India is yet to respond to price formula presented by Iran during the 4th tripartite meeting, as the price payable by India would also include cost of transportation of gas and transit fee to be payable to Pakistan for passage of gas within Pakistani territory. These issues are under discussion with Pakistan.